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By Jennifer Patrick

FASHION TRENDS 2009

Spring is finally here. The sky is blue and the flowers are blooming. It's finally getting warmer and the big question is, what do we wear?

It's a different kind of year for fashion and a different kind of season. I don't know about you, but I am getting tired of 'abstaining' from shopping and being conservative. When Victoria Beckham pitched her new clothing line, even she said, "In a recession, aren't all women looking for an investment that lasts?" So that sums it up, girls. Being gauche and showy is out and classics are in. If you are going to spend, spend wisely on investment pieces that will last forever or that can be worn over and over in many different ways. To save money this year, I am all about a touch of this or a hint of that...nothing over the top.

When Sarah Jessica Parker was asked what Carrie Bradshaw would do in these harsh economic times, she said, "She would probably end up in a hospital. Perhaps she would go back to her 80's stuff and start bringing it back out." This leads us to spring trend number one.

80S REBIRTH

This one is a little tough for me since I am an 80s girl. My theory is if you were old enough to participate in the trend the first time, you just may be too old to do it the second time. I'm not sure you would want to see me in my neon green off the shoulder sweatshirt and neon pink pumps from junior high. Thankfully we aren't talking Flashdance this year, but a splash of neon here and there (I'm thinking accessories) to keep you up to date is a safe bet.



BLACK IS THE NEW BLACK (& WHITE)

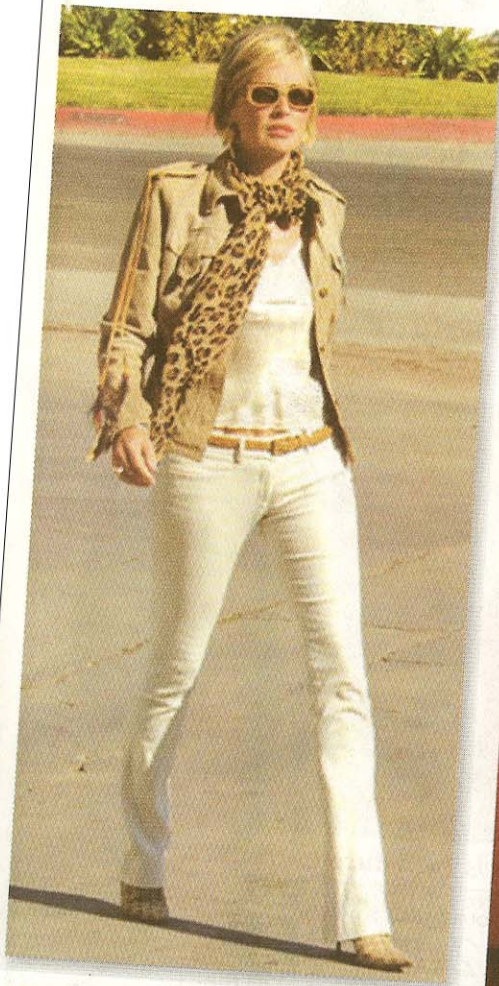
Spring's bold patterns look best in classic black and white. Geometric dresses and separates with funky black shoes are sure to turn heads. Throw on a colorful bag or belt and suddenly you are spot on. Striped skinny pants with a crisp white shirt and some chunky black and white bangles will turn up the volume on this classic look.



HEAVY METAL

Always a proponent of the glam punk look, I am happy this trend is back... think lots of black and gray (my favorite!) with lots of chains and layered necklaces. Metallic dresses, tops, and accessories are at the head of the class here. If that's too over the top, try one cool accessory: a studded belt, strappy gladiator sandals, a chain handled bag, or some metal bracelets stacked up your arm. Your inner punk rocker will be evident!

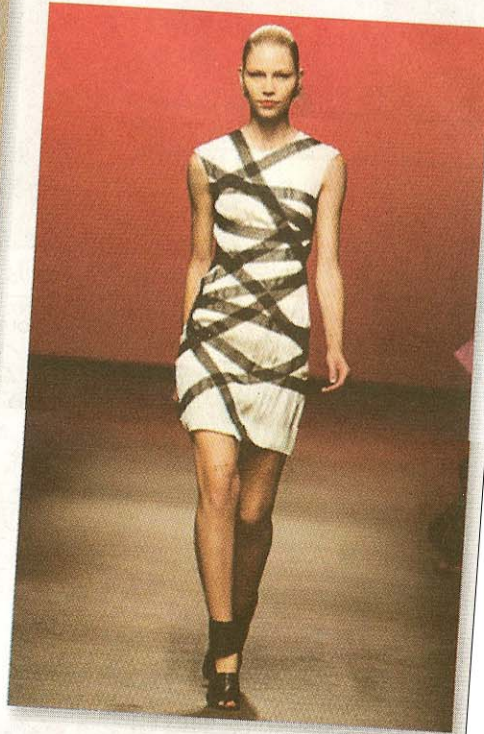




DRESS TO KILL

If you can't decide what to wear, you can never go wrong with a dress. For spring, we have the 'bondage' or 'bandage' dress with skin-tight bands to make you look thinner ala Herve Leger, and the white shift dresses accented with strips of black. Floral dresses were huge for fall and are still relevant for spring -minus the layers, of course. The new structured shoulder styles are bold and contemporary. And you can never go wrong with a simple dress, killer heels and a fabulous bag.

Of course, a little of this and a mix of that goes a long way in staying true to your personal style. Wearing your trusty Louis Vuitton bag with your new Safari jacket will work, as will pairing some pretty new spring stilettos with your favorite LBD (little black dress) and then throwing on your Burberry trench. Black and white is always fresh and so easy to pull together. Mixing florals and prints will instantly give you a modern look, too.



JUNGLE FEVER

Safari jackets, animal prints, strappy sandals...the great thing about the Safari look is that you probably already have the key elements. A fabulous tan Safari jacket is fundamental. The 2009 version of Safari includes thick belts, plenty of wood and chunky bangles, and very strappy sandals. Throw on an animal print scarf or bag and voila! You're ready to brave the jungle!

THIS YEAR'S TRENDS...

...are about mixing the old with the new. Go through the magazines and rip out any looks that you like. Magazine editors and stylists have innovative ideas, and so do you! Shop your closet and try to mix up existing pieces in a new way. Make a list of pieces that you really need to update your look, and shop only for the items on the list. Focused shoppers are savvy shoppers. Be creative, have fun and see how much you save!

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